

Saturday Magazine.

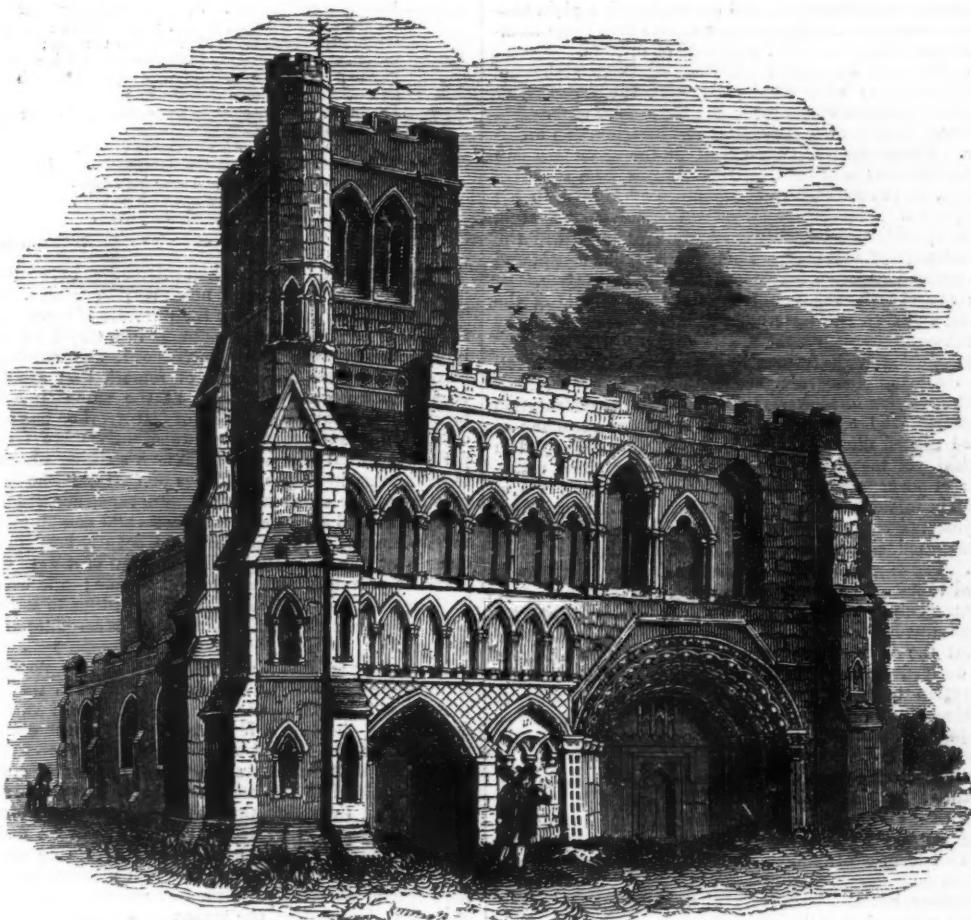
No. 513.

SUPPLEMENT,

JUNE, 1840.

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ONE PENNY.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE. No. III.



PRIORY CHURCH, DUNSTABLE.

6. SARACENIC ARCHITECTURE.

WHEN Constantine, in A.D. 328, founded the city of Constantinople, he enriched it with the treasures of Rome: all that could be removed was taken from the "imperial city," to adorn his new capital. At a subsequent period, when the successor of Constantine removed from the city every valuable specimen of art, (which Alaric had spared in the sacking of Rome,) he loaded several ships therewith, which were driven by a tempest upon the coast of Sicily; the commander was killed, and the Saracens, then in possession of the country, carried their spoils to Alexandria.

The Arabian, Saracenic, or Moorish architecture is another illustration of the remark already made of the influence of religion upon architecture. The religion of Mohammed was diffused from Indus to the Nile, by Arabs, whose fanatical zeal led them to put to the sword all who refused to own the doctrines of the Koran. The Roman power had declined, and the eastern countries, once subject to it, were so enfeebled by luxury or misrule, as to fall easily under the dominion of the arch impostor and his immediate successors. In a very few years Syria, Persia, and Egypt were

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totally subdued; more than four thousand Christian churches were destroyed, and rude shrines, called *maschiads*, afterwards *mosques*, were substituted. But as the religion of Mohammed became more securely settled, its followers acquired a love of luxury and splendour, accompanied by a taste for learning and the arts of life. The literature of the Greeks was translated into Arabic, and schools were established for the study of science, especially mathematics, in which the Arabians greatly excelled.

Thus, while Europe was involved in darkness,—while the rude tribes of the north subjected the fairer portion of the Roman empire to devastation and ruin,—the Arabians were advancing in civilization, and obtaining that efficiency in the arts of peace and war, which made them so long celebrated.

The earlier style of the Saracenic architecture bears some resemblance to that which prevailed in the Byzantine empire. It is probable that the cupolas of their earlier buildings were suggested by those of Sancta Sophia, and similar structures; and the columns which they employed, if not actually taken from existing Roman structures, were rude imitations of them. But as they advanced in science and

art, they seem to have constructed temples peculiar to themselves; and, disdaining any longer to borrow the ideas of them from the nations they had conquered, they invented, or rather composed, from the study of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman edifices, that style which, even to the present day, is to be seen wherever Mohammedan dominion prevails.

Saracenic architecture is singularly light and fantastic, yet marked with grace and elegance. It is exceedingly difficult to define, on account of that endless variety of form which everywhere prevails. Their columns are slender and variously formed, and are employed generally to support low arcades: the shafts are short and thin; plain, or ornamented with lines in perpendicular or spiral grooves: the capitals are either imitations of the Grecian orders, or formed of foliage variously disposed, and crowned with a plain abacus. In Saracenic architecture we always find large numbers of these columns, either clustered or in rows.

The Arabians are also celebrated for their arches of which three sorts were employed; viz., the *crecscnt*, or horse-shoe arch, the *round* arch, and the *cuspid* arch.

The first form of arch is peculiar to Mohammedan architecture. The *crecscnt* is the symbol of the Mohammedan faith, as the cross is of the Christian; and its form is said to have been first introduced in architecture by Muavia in his new capital of Damascus. It was called the *sacred* arch, and was splendidly adorned with sculpture: it formed the usual entrance of mosques. This arch may be considered as the really distinctive feature of the Saracenic style.

The *round* arch was simply an imitation of that of the Romans, and seems to have been used indiscriminately by the Arabians.

The *cuspid* arch was formed by segments of circles, meeting in a point at the vertex.

As the religion of Mohammed forbade the representation of animals*, the ornaments of the Arabians consisted of coloured glazed tiles and mosaics, which were employed in a fanciful yet tasteful manner, in adorning their apartments: other ornaments were made to consist of texts of the Koran, inlaid in the form of mosaics, and often adorned with precious stones; of plants, stalks, and foliage gracefully entwined, either painted or formed in highly relieved stucco. The enrichments of Moorish edifices are very much confined to flat surfaces, the walls being sculptured all over with ornaments. The appearance of the buildings erected by Mohammedan conquerors in Spain leads to the supposition that the idea of thus ornamenting them must have been derived from the hieroglyphical embellishments of Egyptian temples. From the general appearance of these Moorish ornaments has arisen the term *Arabesque* or *Moresque*, applicable to all ornaments of a fantastic character.

Another species of ornament, called *fret-work*, is also prevalent in Arabian architecture. It is said to have originated with the Persians, as a sort of screen capable of admitting air and light, and excluding the direct rays of the sun. This form of ornament admitted of a great display of elegant taste.

Corbelling has also been referred to the same style: but its origin is very doubtful. *Corbels* are projections from a wall, intended for the support of any object. The Arabians used them most in their castles, to support a projecting parapet, in the floor of which were perpendicular holes, called *machicolations*†, whence the besieged could, under cover, dart missiles, and pour down melted pitch, and other destructive materials, on the besiegers who should attempt to scale the walls.

We see the Arabian style well displayed in the numerous mosques, tombs, and mausoleums of the Mohammedan religion; the most prominent features of which are the towering domes and encircling minarets. The latter are light, circular turrets, rising high above the other parts of the building, and furnished at the upper parts with projecting galleries, where the muezzins call to prayers. The figure at p. 253 represents this act, as also some of the broader features of Arabian architecture. We may also refer to the description of the Moorish palace of Alhambra, (*Saturday Magazine*, Vol. I., p. 114.) as affording some idea of the splendour of Saracenic architecture.

* About the tenth century, however, the caliphs introduced sculptured animals, such as lions, griffins, &c., supporting columns, and adorning fountains.

† This word, resulting from the union of a Latin and a Greek word, implies *war-sieves*.

7. THE SECOND CHRISTIAN ERA.

What awful perspective! While from our sight
With gradual stealth the lateral windows hide
Their portraiture, their stone-work glimmers, dyed
In the soft chequerings of a sleepy light.
Martyr, or king, or sainted eremite,
Whoe'er ye be, that thus—yourselves unseen—
Imbue your prison-bars with solemn sheen,
Shine on, until ye fade with coming night!
But, from the arms of silence—List! O list
The music bursteth into second life;—
The notes luxuriate—every stone is kissed
By sound, or ghost of sound, in mazy strife!
Heart-thrilling strains; that cast before the eye
Of the devout a veil of ecstasy!

They dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build. Be mine in hours of fear
Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here;
Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam;
Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam
Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the wreath
Of awe-struck wisdom droops; or let my path
Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-light dome
Hath typified by reach of daring art
Infinity's embrace; whose guardian crest,
The silent cross, among the stars shall spread—
As now, when she has also seen her breast
Filled with mementos, satiate with its past,
Of grateful England's overflowing dead.

WORDSWORTH.

DURING the middle ages, when intercourse between distant nations, and even between neighbouring states, was uncertain and difficult; when the pursuits of commerce and the arts of civilized life were almost in a torpid state; when improvements were slowly introduced, and carelessly received, it is especially worthy of remark that architecture became more widely diffused, at the same time that it presented a greater uniformity of feature, than has been the case in any succeeding, and apparently more favourable period. And not only did there exist a striking resemblance to each other in all the buildings of that date, however distant the countries in which they were constructed, but there was also a rapid adoption of new forms and combinations: so that, whenever a variation of style occurred in any particular spot, the knowledge and imitation of it were speedily found to prevail in places the most remote; and even such buildings as had been commenced according to some other style were altered and fashioned in accordance with the new mode.

To account for this remarkable fact, we may observe that, at the period of which we are speaking, when the lay portion of the community was engaged in constant warfare and devastation, the only safe places of retreat where industry might be employed, and the arts might be exercised, were the churches and convents. The study of architecture was chiefly confined to the members of religious communities; and at that time also, the skill and taste of the architect had scarcely any other object than the erection and ornament of sacred edifices: hence we may trace, in the intercourse maintained between the different monasteries, and in the frequent journeys performed by monks, on the concerns of their various orders, the means by which a knowledge of architecture, and of the variations introduced therein from time to time, might be transmitted from one country to another, and acted upon in the manner before mentioned. But another, and more universally prevailing cause for the similarity of architectural buildings at that period, seems to be the awakening of Lombardy and the neighbouring states of Italy to trade, commerce, and independence, and the formation among their citizens of companies, free corporations, or *guilds*, possessed of the exclusive privilege of exercising their peculiar trades or professions. Not only mere mechanical employments, but those of a more intellectual nature, were submitted to the shackles and restrictions of these guilds, and were only to be entered on by a hard and severe apprenticeship.

When Lombardy had embraced the Christian faith, its kings and queens were emulous of filling their dominions with churches and monasteries: thus were called into full activity the talents and resources of the company of builders, who had associated themselves into similar bodies to those just described, and who, after passing the different fixed stages of apprenticeship, were received as masters, and entitled to exercise their professions as "free and accepted masons." But Lombardy its self could not long find employment for these companies, or make their privileges of great and important benefit to them: another sphere was

accordingly sought by them, and in the north of Europe, where the gradual spread of Christianity produced a corresponding need for sacred edifices, they found that occupation which had begun to fail them in their native land. Endowed by the Pope with peculiar rights and privileges, the masonic associations went from city to city, and from country to country, regulating for themselves the price of their labour, prohibiting native artists from entering into competition with them, and claiming entire exemption from the laws and statutes of the countries in which their services were required. Whether they entered a country of their own accord to seek employment there, or whether they were called thither by missionaries who had preceded and prepared the way for them, they were always headed by a chief surveyor, who governed the whole party, and appointed one man out of every ten, under the name of "warden" to overlook the nine others in their work.

Thus did the architects of all the sacred edifices derive their knowledge from the same source, and obey the rules of the same central school; and thus is explained the otherwise inexplicable fact of the similarity of construction in buildings the most remote from each other, and which are known to have been erected almost simultaneously; hence also the rapidity with which changes in the style of architecture were adopted in different countries more or less distant from each other. So numerous at length were the masonic companies, that many were frequently seeking to erect religious edifices in the same country; while so emulous were they of distinction in their art; so devoted in the employment of their faculties on that single study, that, difficult and complicated as their subject was, they were enabled to attain an eminence, and to advance the art to a degree of perfection, which would be to us altogether past belief, did not the result of their labours, in many cases, remain to prove their extraordinary skill. For the purpose of securing to themselves all the benefits of their craft, the corporate bodies of free and accepted masons are found to have guarded with peculiar care the knowledge which they had themselves attained; gradually revealing it under oaths of profound secrecy to those who wished to become members of their community, and making it a perfect mystery to the public at large. It appears, also, that they either closely concealed, or even destroyed the calculations and working plans which they must have had to aid them in their labours; so that they have left few traces of the skill by which they performed their admirable works.

On the diminution of papal influence in different countries, and on the increase of learning and industry among the inhabitants, the jealousy of the native sovereigns was awakened at the intrusion of bodies of foreigners, possessing privileges as wide, and rights as exclusive, as were those of the free-masons. The support derived by these companies from the papal see, being also more precarious, they gradually began to decline: so that, in consequence, in some places they dissolved their communities; in others they were expelled; until at last they ceased altogether to follow their profession, and nothing remained of this once powerful body but an empty name and formula, which others have adopted and appropriated to their own use for the concealment of pursuits, which, if not positively beneficial, are at least innoxious to the world.

The progress of architecture was for a while suspended on the approach of the thousandth year after the birth of our Saviour, owing to the very prevalent idea that that would be the period of his re-appearance, and of the destruction of the globe. It was not until the time had passed by, and men began to recover from their fright and torpor, that they could apply themselves to the repair of their churches and monasteries, or to the completion of those which had been left neglected at the period of general dismay. But, subsequently to this, we find the number of churches rapidly increasing, and many a stately pile may be traced as the work of the architects of that century. The Crusades too, which ensued in less than a century after the bygone millenium, greatly increased the revenues of the church, and were in consequence the means of augmenting the number of religious edifices in every Christian country. At the same period an improvement took place in civil architecture. The nobles who were bound to the Holy Land often sold privileges and enfranchisements to the cities under their control; and this producing an increase of wealth and independence to the citizens, they soon began to want, and to erect, edifices for civil purposes, which were often extensive and magnificent. In Lombardy, and in the cities of the Adriatic, were seen the first magnificent

town halls; and later we may trace them in Germany, from thence we find them adopted in Belgium, Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp, and Amsterdam.

We do not find that the free-masons, privileged as they were by the papal authority exerted on their behalf, could ever find access to the Greek empire; nor does it appear that the regions which fell under the sway of the Mohammedan powers were much indebted to Rome, or to the free-masons, for their architectural buildings, though they seem to have borrowed from Constantinople and from the Greeks. Where the Moorish kings held sway, we find the Christians, in Spain, to have copied their style of architecture; and it was not until the Catholics had acquired a decided superiority in that country, that the Gothic style of architecture began to prevail.

We have already stated that the introduction of the arch was productive of great and important changes in Roman architecture. One of the features of the style which succeeded the ancient Roman was that which is now called *groined vaulting*, the idea of which must soon have presented itself to any one employed in the construction of a common cylindrical vault; since the intersection of two of the latter would produce the groined vault. The ribs of the groins were made to rest on columns, and the differences of character in that species of architecture which we are about to consider arose from the various modes of arranging this system of arches.

The style of building which prevailed in Europe from the fall of the Roman empire till the sixteenth century, and which is marked by the consistent application of the pointed arch, has been classed under the general name of *GOthic ARCHITECTURE*. This name has been objected to, as being incorrect, and as conveying an erroneous idea of the origin and invention of the style to which it is appropriated; yet, however ill chosen the epithet may be, or however contemptuous the sense in which it was originally applied, the usage of it has become so confirmed through a succession of ages, and it is also now so difficult to find a more fitting appellation, that it seems altogether useless to attempt to explode it. "The architecture of the middle ages," and "Christian architecture," have been suggested as more expressive of the style in question; but both these terms are objectionable, and involve some degree of error. Perhaps "Pointed Architecture" may be considered the least exceptionable term, and may be used synonymously with the word "Gothic."

It will not be uninteresting to place before our readers a few, out of the many theories which have been started as to the origin of pointed architecture—theories amid which, as it has been said, it is as easy to find the pole as to arrive at the truth. "Sir Christopher Wren was of opinion," says his son, "that what we now vulgarly call the Gothic, ought properly and truly to be named the Saracenic architecture refined by the Christians, which first of all began in the East, after the fall of the Greek empire, by the prodigious success of those people that adhered to Mahomet's doctrine, who out of zeal to this religion built mosques, caravanserais, and sepulchres, wherever they came. These they contrived of a round form, because they would not imitate the Christian figure of a cross, nor the old Greek manner, which they thought to be idolatrous, and for that reason all sculpture became offensive to them. They then fell into a new mode of their own invention. The quarries of great marble by which the vanquished nations of Syria, Egypt, and all the East had been supplied for columns, architraves, and great stones, were now deserted. The Saracens, therefore, were necessitated to adapt their architecture to such materials, whether marble or freestone, as every country readily afforded. They thought columns and heavy cornices impertinent, and might be omitted; and affecting the round form for mosques, they erected cupolas in some instances with grace enough. The holy war gave the Christians who had been there an idea of Saracen works, which were afterwards by them imitated in the West, and they refined upon it every day, as they proceeded in building churches." Lord Aberdeen supports Wren in this theory, and says, "If a line be drawn from the north of the Euxine through Constantinople to Egypt, we shall discover in every country to the eastward of this boundary frequent examples of the pointed arch, accompanied with the slender proportions of Gothic architecture; in Asia Minor, Syria, Arabia, Persia, from the neighbourhood of the Caspian through the wilds of Tartary; in the various kingdoms, and throughout the whole extent of India, and even to the furthest limits of China. It is true that we are for the most part unable to

ascertain the precise dates of these buildings; but this is in reality not very important, it being sufficient to state the fact of their comparative antiquity, which, joined to the vast diffusion of the style, appears adequate to justify our conclusion. Seeing then the universal prevalence of this mode in the East, which is satisfactorily accounted for by the extensive revolutions and conquests effected by the eastern warriors in that part of the world, it can scarcely appear requisite to discuss the probability of its having been introduced from the West; or still less further to refute the notions of those who refer the origin of the style to the invention of English artists."

Gray, the poet, who patiently studied both eastern and western architecture, maintains an opposite opinion. He traces the derivation of the Moorish from the Grecian, but will not admit the idea that the Gothic was a copy of the Moorish. "That the Gothic manner is the Saracen or Moorish," he says, "we have the great authority of Sir Christopher Wren's opinion; and yet I cannot help thinking it undoubtedly wrong. The palaces in Spain I never saw but in description, which gives us little or no idea of things; but the doge's palace at Venice I have seen, which is in the arabesque manner; and the houses in Barbary may be seen in Dr. Shaw's book, not to mention abundance of other eastern buildings in Turkey, Persia, &c., which we have views of, and they seem plainly to be corruptions of the Greek architecture, broke into little parts indeed, and covered with little ornaments, but in a taste very distinguishable from that which we call Gothic. There is one thing which runs through the Moorish buildings, that an imitator would certainly have been first struck with, and would have tried to copy, and that is the cupolas, which cover everything,—baths, apartments, and even kitchens; yet who ever saw a Gothic cupola? It is a thing plainly of Greek origin. I do not see anything but the slender spires which serve for steeples, which may perhaps be borrowed from the Saracen minarets on their mosques."

The very different theory which supposes the Gothic to be a mere corruption of the Grecian style was advocated, among others, by Horace Walpole, and Barry the painter. The latter, writing from Italy, says, "The manner of building called Gothic, is generally believed to have been the invention of the Goths, as the name imports, and to have been brought into Italy by these barbarians, after they had established themselves upon the ruins of the Roman empire. The beginnings of this barbarous architecture, however, are traceable in buildings erected in Italy even before the arts were much declined, and long before the Goths had any footing there. The number of examples have convinced me that it is nothing more than the architecture of the old Greeks and Romans in the state of final corruption into which it had fallen."

Passing over the theory which led Warburton to conclude "that no attentive observer ever viewed a regular avenue of well-grown trees intermixing their branches over head, but it presently put him in mind of the long vista through the Gothic cathedral,—or even entered one of the larger or more elegant edifices of this kind, but it presented to his imagination an avenue of trees; and this alone is what can be truly called the Gothic style of building," we may notice some sensible remarks advanced by the Antiquarian Society in 1802, as follows:—"It is much to be wished that the word Gothic should no longer be used in speaking of the architecture of England from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. The term tends to give false ideas on the subject, and originates with the Italian writers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, who applied the expression, *La Maniera Gotica*, in contempt to all works of art in the Middle Ages. The style used by the Saxons is very properly called Saxon. The improvements introduced after the Norman Conquest justify the appellation of Norman to the edifices of that period. The nation assumed a new character about the time of Henry the Second. The language properly called English was then formed, and an architecture founded on the Norman and Saxon, but extremely different from both, was invented by English artists. It surely is equally just and proper to distinguish this style by the honourable appellation of *English*; and it is to be hoped that no English antiquary will be offended at the substitution of an accurate and honourable name in place of one which is both contemptuous and inappropriate."

It would occupy too much time to state all the various conflicting opinions as to the origin and formation of the Gothic style. The difficulties attending the subject have awakened much zealous research and controversy, and

have been the means of exciting a desire for the study of Gothic architecture, and a popular feeling towards it, which have proved highly beneficial. One of the most probable conjectures respecting the origin of the pointed arch, is that of Milner, who supposes the idea to have been suggested by the intersection of circular blank arches crossing each other, and employed for decoration on the faces of walls. But the mere circumstance of doors or windows being pointed is insufficient to give an idea of the finished style itself, and it is probable that the researches of antiquarians will not throw much light on this contested subject. The Italians made a division of the pointed style, in accordance with the distinguishing character which it assumed in different countries; thus they called the style which prevailed in the north of Italy the *Lombard Gothic*; that on the north of the Alps they called *German Gothic*; and that in Spain, and other countries, they called *Arabic*, or *Moorish Gothic*. In England the different features of the style are termed *Saxon* and *Norman Gothic*, *Full* or *Simple Gothic*, and *Florid Gothic*.

Between the sixth and tenth centuries the religious structures of Italy were probably raised on the plan of the ancient basilica, or of the cathedral at Constantinople; but after the tenth century, the characters of the eastern and western basilica seem to have coalesced, forming what is commonly called the *Lombard Gothic*; a style of building which resembled neither the Roman basilica, nor the Greek cross and cupola. This style was called by the French the *Lombard*, as indicating the place in which this new system of church-architecture was matured. In England it received the name of the *Saxon*, but without sufficient authority; since the rude Saxons imported into Britain no style of building peculiar to themselves. It has also been called *Norman*, because the style was adopted in Normandy, whence it was more immediately imported into Britain.

In preference, therefore, either to Norman Gothic, Saxon, or Anglo-Saxon Gothic architecture, we shall prefer the term *Lombard Gothic*, as more expressive of the country and people, where and by whom those peculiar forms, borrowed or imitated, were combined, and first extensively practised and extended to other countries of Europe.

The chief characteristics of the Lombard style, in contradistinction to the Grecian style, are a general clumsiness and want of proportion, together with a large variety of ornament in very questionable taste.

The form of the Lombard churches is that of a Latin cross, oblong, with a semicircular chancel: consisting within of a nave and two aisles, separated by arched arcades, and often with a crypt beneath: support is given by means of small buttresses placed without the building. The semicircular Roman arch is almost always employed in these structures in the doors and windows, and indeed wherever an arch is required. Columns too are made to occupy the subordinate place of piers or supports to arches, thus entirely changing this principal feature of Grecian architecture.

The most remarkable ornament of this style is the *chevron* or zigzag work, occurring in single, double, triple, and quadruple rows, and of various dimensions, between the mouldings of doors and windows. Then come the festooned, the crenelated, and the billet mouldings: then the mouldings severally called pine cone, the simple and double astreated, diamond, platted, the beak, and the cat-head.

The columns are of various forms and proportions, depending upon the office they fill: the shaft is usually of equal diameter throughout. The earliest forms were cylindrical, with a rough square block for a base: afterwards multangular shafts were formed; and others with slender half columns round a thick pillar. The shafts are sometimes covered with spiral or zigzag ornaments, or with rhomboidal or lozenge-shaped panels sunk therein.

The capitals too are very various. They are usually large, square stones; either plain or rudely carved with grotesque figures of animals, monsters, and human beings in all sorts of attitudes. Sometimes they resemble baskets or vases with volutes or scrolls below the angles of the abacus: the dentil-bands, beadings, and foliage of Roman capitals were modified and copied from the ruins of the edifices of that nation.

The door-ways and windows were extremely deep, on account of the thick walls of these edifices. These openings were surmounted with semicircular arches, the mouldings about which are composed of reeds and channels with concave or plane faces between them. The concave spaces are either unadorned, or have at intervals roses and foliage,

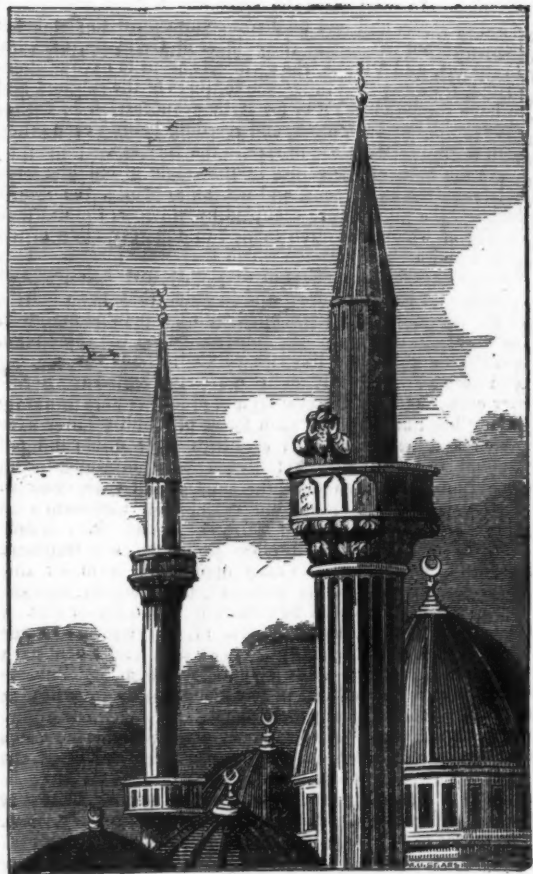
and grotesque figures of animals or heads. The archivolts are frequently covered with a profusion of chevron-work, and the soffits of the arches are notched, so as to correspond therewith. The windows of the upper story were smaller than those below, and germinated, that is, two small ones were included within a large one, supported by plain short pillars. Triple windows were also introduced, consisting of a central window, with a smaller one on each side. We notice also a series of false windows formed by intersecting arches, and employed in second stories, to decorate the outer walls.

Corbels were in general use: in the early specimens they were very clumsy, and projected considerably for the support of a massive flat cornice: their ends were ornamented with uncouth figures; but afterwards with heads only, when they supported one, two, or three rows of arches. In still later specimens the corbels support a very narrow cornice, or a narrow band with a saw edge is substituted for them.

The Lombard architects also constructed bell-towers, for the purpose of collecting a congregation from distant points at a particular hour; and in order that the sound of the bells might be extensively diffused, and not impeded by surrounding objects, the bells were hung in the uppermost part of the tower or belfry. At first, these towers were plain square buildings, not rising above the roof of the church; they were afterwards increased in height, and steeples were added. As the use of bells became more general, a building separate from the church was erected to contain them; because neither belfries nor baptistries were considered to be essential parts of the church. At a still later period, these belfries were added to the general structure of the church, the appearance of which was thereby greatly improved.

Although the round, or Lombard, style of architecture had become universally adopted throughout the countries which acknowledged the jurisdiction of the Latin church, and though the prevalence of its forms throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa, marked as it were the bounds of papal authority, yet at the very period when it seemed to have secured a lengthened duration, it was suddenly neglected for a new, and very different style of architecture.

In districts where the requisite materials for building were scantily supplied, it was desirable, nevertheless, to build churches in such a manner as that they should afford room for the accommodation of large congregations—for the arrangement of processions—for the performance of numerous services and masses; and that they should stand pre-eminent above all other buildings, while at the same time the quantity of materials employed in their construction would be the smallest possible. It was also necessary that in northern countries, such a form of building should be employed as would combine, with great extent and elevation, the advantage of surfaces which should afford little opportunity for the accumulation of snow on the roofs. Thus, in ages when the arts and sciences were almost confined to the religious communities, and when monks were themselves the chief designers of sacred edifices, it is to be supposed that fitness for the purposes of religious worship, and adaptation of the building to the climate in which it was to be erected, were mainly studied by them, and led the way for many of the new and peculiar characteristics of the style in question. In all previous styles of architecture the walls were employed to enclose the space destined for use, and to support the roof which protected it above. They were therefore made of such an extreme thickness and size as to occupy much of the space which might have been gained in the interior of the building, as well as to consume a vast quantity of materials. Where insulated pillars were added, they only shared with these massive walls the task of supporting the covering overhead; and as the arches within were still rounded and spreading, they could be covered by roofs of only moderate pitch. But, in the new method of arrangement, architects no longer constructed for the general support of the roof a continued mass of masonry, but erected pillars at certain distances from each other, which might leave an unobstructed space around and between them, but whose position should be so regulated as to afford sufficient support to the superincumbent parts. Thus was formed a skeleton of long thin masses, with wide interstices between; and these forming the support of the roof of the building, to the relief to the walls and arches, nothing more was required as a lateral enclosure than a mere partition to shield the edifice from the intrusion of man and the effects of the elements. At first, the arches of these buildings continued to be made semicircular; but after a while,



SARACENIC ARCHITECTURE.—MUEZZIN CALLING TO PRAYER.

in order perhaps to gain additional elevation, and means of supporting the roof, the arches and ribs, and cross springers over them, were made pointed. But while the rounded arches of the Lombard style had a pressure almost entirely in a downward direction, and required only a shallow buttress, these new arches and ribs, weighing less heavily on the piers beneath them, but imposing an oblique pressure, which had a tendency to drive the pillars outwards, demanded a counter pressure also in an oblique direction; and on this account masses of masonry, called *buttresses*, were added to the perpendicular pillars. When the arch was of excessive height, the buttresses were not formed of solid bodies of masonry, but were carried out in the shape of an arch on each side, and became what are called *arched* or *flying buttresses*. These were at first short, and close to the body of the building; but afterwards, when they became too wide and spreading for longer concealment, they appeared on the outside richly adorned, and forming one of the peculiar characteristics of the style. It was found that a vertical weight on that part of an arch which joins the pier has a tendency to counteract the outward pressure of the former on the latter; and additional weights were therefore added to the buttresses, in the form of *pinnacles*, marking on the outside of the building the positions of the different rows of pillars within, as well as of the individual pillars which composed them.

In the change which thus took place in the character of public edifices, it became necessary to dismiss the former accompaniment of the arch, the noble cupola. The spread of the cupola would have been inconsistent with the character of the new style of building, which indeed was not fitted to support such an appendage; instead therefore of width, the *height* of the edifice was the most remarkable feature to be observed; and accordingly, at the crossing of the nave and transepts, a tower was carried up into a square, with a steeple which diminished in circumference as it attained a height equal with the elevation of the nave. The system introduced into the body of the churches of carrying everything to the greatest height, and giving it the utmost sharpness, was also observed in the construction of

steeple. In most cases the spire was a mere addition in wood or stone, and had no direct connexion with the tower beneath; but in some of the edifices of Germany, as Ulm, Frankfort, and Vienna, the architects seem to have contemplated, from the beginning, the loftiness of the summit, and to have prepared the way for it by a succession of arches growing out of each other, and receding behind each other, with a gradual decrease in size to the very top.

As the walls of the edifice in this style of building were only required as screens, and not as supports, the spaces between the pillars were occupied by windows, the extreme outline of which was often carried to the very edge of the pillars and arches, between which they were placed. This arrangement had the effect of displaying the boldness and lightness of the structure; and in order that the windows might the more fully harmonize with the pointed arches of the building, they were now constructed on the same plan, and their arches were likewise pointed. Thus the pointed arch became universally and exclusively adopted as a necessary consequence of the new style of architecture, and a taste having been acquired for such forms of building, they were copied and perpetuated in countries where utility did not demand their introduction; arches were multiplied, and barred into minute subdivisions, intersecting each other in all directions, while the building was likewise adorned with *pinnacles, spires, tabernacle work, cusps, corbels, and tracery*, in almost endless profusion. From the universal shaping of every part, the most appropriate term for this description of architecture seems to be indeed the *pointed*, and no appellation could be formed to give a better idea of the grand general characteristic of the style. In the western front of the building there was generally one large window with vertical sides and a pointed arch. All the windows were divided into two or more apertures, or *lights*, and the vertical posts which formed these divisions were termed *mullions*. These frequently branched off at the top, and intersected each other; and when the height of the window was great, there were likewise horizontal bars, or *mullions*. The intersecting mullions, as well as the ribs of the groined ceilings, formed what was called *tracery work*. The ridges of spires and pinnacles, as well as the pediments of windows, were frequently adorned with sculptured leaves, placed at intervals; and these from their curling forms were called *crockets*. The summits of such pediments and pinnacles were likewise furnished with knots of foliage, which were termed *finials*, and the sculptured canopies which covered tombs, or niches for statues, either on the exterior or interior of the building, were named *tabernacle work*. In the upper part of the windows the stone-work is frequently disposed in three or more segments, with *cusps*, or points projecting inward; and these, from their resemblance to leaves, have, according to the number of such segments, the names of *trefoils, quatrefoils, &c.*

A still increasing taste for ornament gradually appeared: pillars, at first distinct, but close to each other, were conglomerated into one single cohering mass, each pillar being more slender than before, and each branching off into some of the arches or ribs, or springers, which gave strength to the building, while they added to its apparent lightness. These again were subdivided and multiplied, diverging, converging, and intersecting each other for the sake of ornament, till they formed all that complicated tracery and arching that adorns windows, screens, balustrades, buttresses, &c. The supports of the building being lengthened and compressed, every portion of solid masonry that could be spared being entirely removed, and that which was necessary to the support of the fabric being ingeniously perforated and ornamented, or covered with a veil of tracery of the lightest and most elaborate description; all concurred to strike the spectator with astonishment, and to excite his curiosity as to the means by which so great a weight could be sustained by such apparently slender support. The ornamental details were sometimes carried to absurdity; for instance, where the figures of saints were deemed appropriate ornaments, they were often squeezed into the confined spaces between the shafts, where their narrow lank figures approximated indeed to the pointed style of the edifice, but presented a most unnatural representation of the human form. It was likewise deemed ornamental to deck the curve of an arch with such figures, and no objection was made to the ridiculous position in which they were placed, one above another, and many of them necessarily laid on their sides.

Another ornament, which formed a considerable feature of the pointed style, was armorial bearings. These were

derived from the Crusades; and the successors of such as gained renown in the holy wars, not contented with placing the shields and helmets adorned with these insignia in their halls and dwellings, brought them to the temple of the god of peace, where they were hung in reality or in effigy around the tombs or funeral chapels of their deceased relatives, thus telling a tale of feud and warfare, in a spot where earthly care and turmoil should be no more remembered.

Many buildings, commenced in the pointed style, could never be completed on their original plan; for the architects, in a desire to astound the vulgar, by the height, lightness, and boldness of their structures, frequently lost sight of the degree of strength necessary for their support; and of those which were completed under the influence of such a desire, many fell to pieces almost immediately. It must be confessed that, beautiful as it is, Gothic architecture has not within it so permanent a degree of solidity, as that where the pressure is perpendicular, instead of oblique; or where the arches being rounded have a pressure much less oblique than in the pointed. That part of the building in which the service was performed was generally built first; and thus we find the choir to have been in several instances the only part completed.

The states of Lombardy, and other neighbouring republics, being early remarkable for their industry and public spirit, soon began to construct fabrics for civil purposes; and as these arose during the reign of the rounded style of architecture, their town-houses, corporation-halls, &c., exhibited some degree of elegance in that style. As commerce and the arts extended towards the north, each of the rising cities began to take pride in rearing, in addition to cathedrals and churches, magnificent halls for the meetings of its magistrates and merchants, and even fine houses for the dwellings of its inhabitants. In Germany, the style is pure pointed: in Belgium, a sort of *cinq-cento*, or transition from the pointed to the antique.

Germany, where pointed architecture is supposed to have been first produced, is also the country where the finest buildings of that style have been erected, and where the taste for it has been of the greatest duration. France seems next to have received the knowledge of this style, and soonest to have rivalled her neighbour in it; but many of the plans were executed only in part; and of those which were the most beautifully carried into effect, the ornamental parts of the buildings have unfortunately fallen a sacrifice to iconoclastic* zeal; while many of the edifices themselves have since been levelled with the ground by the revolutionists. England seems next to have received the knowledge of Gothic architecture, but the buildings were mostly executed in a plain and simple manner. The cathedral of Amiens, was begun in the same year with that of Salisbury (1220); and the Sainte Chapelle at Paris was consecrated only twenty-eight years after: the comparison, therefore, of these buildings with each other, will show that England had not at that period received the knowledge of, or possessing the knowledge had not yet acquired the taste for, all that aerial lightness, and that luxuriance of ornament, which are so remarkable in the French churches. The zeal for pointed architecture however was fully displayed in this country. Many of our churches display the mixture of the Lombard with the pointed style; the buildings having been commenced in the former, and finished in the latter. Dunstable, Canterbury, Peterborough, and Ely exhibit a union of the two styles; while Salisbury, Wells, Exeter, Litchfield, York, and others are entirely pointed. Our cathedrals, however, cannot be compared in size with those on the continent; our naves and choirs are inferior, and with the exception of Henry the Seventh's chapel at Westminster, St. George's chapel at Windsor, and one or two others, we have no religious or other edifices, which display an equal richness of decoration with the foreign buildings. In Italy, the pointed style is found everywhere engrafted on the round; or where the building itself is in the latter style, the bishops' thrones, the altar, canopies &c., are pointed: yet it never gained the same ascendancy in that country, which it did further to the north; and most of the Italian cathedrals which are called specimens of the pointed style are deficient in its essential characteristics. During the prevalence of this style, no peculiar name was given to it; but, afterwards, when it was superseded by the so-called *return to the antique*, it was considered as barbarous, and stigmatized by the name of *GOthic*.

* This word is compounded from the Greek, and means image-breaking.

8. THE CINQUE-CENTO STYLE.

We shall now proceed to speak of that rapid and universal change which caused the rejection of pointed or Gothic architecture, and the adoption, in some superficial degree, of the styles of ancient Greece and Rome. This sudden desertion of all that had been the most admired, and the most carefully perfected, has been assigned by some to the accidental discovery of some of the master-pieces of ancient literature, which had long lain hidden in monastic libraries, and of some specimens of ancient art, rescued from beneath the soil of Rome. By others it has been considered as the necessary consequence of a returning taste for the literature and the fine arts of the ancients. It has been likewise attributed to the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, which drove many Greeks from their homes, and by their means introduced into the Latin empire the fondness for ancient architecture, which those Greeks are supposed to have preserved. The most reasonable of these suppositions is that which ascribes the change to a revival of industry, trade, and public spirit, and of whatever else might lead the way, as in ancient Greece, for a prevailing taste for literature and the fine arts. The spirit of liberty was abroad; men were beginning to throw off the shackles which had bound them down in ignorance and inaction, and a knowledge of ancient art was no longer confined to the dwellers in monasteries, and kept a secret there. As the wealth and skill of the laity increased, the number of important fabrics, unconnected with religion, increased also: and as the church, about the era of the especial pre-eminence of the pointed style, began to decline in power and resources, and those agents of the Pope and of the church, whom we have already spoken of, the masonic bodies, were either expelled or withdrawn from most of the stations they formerly occupied; we see here sufficient to account for the extensive change which took place in the feelings and tastes of people in general. Nor is it surprising that a reversion should take place to those ancient and comparatively simple models of Greece and Rome, at a time when the expulsion of the free-masons, who had so deeply studied the pressure and counter-pressure of the most complicated arches, left the less skilful architects imperfectly acquainted with the mysteries of the pointed style. But as this attempt at a resumption of ancient style was rather the effect of an inability on the part of the architects to continue building after the pointed fashion than owing to any real love for the antique, so we find their works to have been of an inferior description, exhibiting in one edifice a collection of patterns of the different ancient orders, instead of a consistent following out of any one of them. Those buildings which retained most of the Lombard style, and thus had not departed so widely from the Roman character, were at first left to preserve their peculiar minuteness of general proportion and other characteristics, and only received in their minor details an appearance more directly assimilating them with pagan Rome. The excavations of ancient baths, and other structures, had brought to light those sculptured imitations of animal and vegetable life which had formerly taken the place of better ornaments; and these, which were called *grotesques* from being found in grottoes, were imitated on every panel and frieze and entablature, while richer ornaments were added in bronze, porphyry, &c. These ornaments were applied without much discrimination, whatever might be the character or purpose of the building. This attempted imitation of the antique has been called, from the era in which it flourished in Italy, the CINQUE-CENTO style. Among the most celebrated architects in this style may be named Brunelleschi, the first restorer of it, Bramante, Leon Baptista Alberti, and Pietro Lombardo.

The abandonment of pointed arches, and the return to the ancient orders of architecture, begun in Italy, soon crossed the Alps, and entered successively France, Spain, Germany, and England. In the last-mentioned country, the cinque-cento style did not develop itself till a century and a half after Brunelleschi had begun the restoration of the antique in Italy. The new or revived style was at first employed only in the members and details of the edifice, while the old was retained in all the general elements of the composition. It appears to have been the custom to commit the design and construction of the buildings to native artists, while foreign innovation was displayed in the mere ornamental details. From the time of the Reformation, a method of building had been gradually adopted, which is usually called Tudor Architecture, or Tudor Gothic,

and which has been styled the illegitimate offspring of the Grecian and the Gothic. It was inferior in elegance to the one, and in magnificence to the other, but it combined a degree of security with domestic comfort, peculiarly suitable to those times. Of the generally picturesque effect of this style, notwithstanding its wildness and oddity, a modern writer of acknowledged taste thus speaks:—"The baron's picturesque hall seemed the offspring of the soil, and in harmony with the accompaniments. The hill, the river, the groves, the rocks, and the residence, seemed all to have risen into existence at once. Tower was heaped upon tower; there was a wilderness of pinnacles and crow-stepped peaks; jealous windows barred and double-barred with iron; passages which led to nothing; ridges of roofs as sharp as knives, on which no snow could lie; projection overlooking projection, to throw the rain from the face of the wall and casements at the very summit of the edifice." But this, as well as the purer Gothic, was now to give way for the introduction of the Cinque-cento or Italian style. The first examples of this style in England were shown at Oxford, in the five orders piled one above another in the front of the public schools, and in the monuments of Elizabeth, and Mary Queen of Scots, in Westminster abbey; all very inferior to the works of that style in Italy. Inigo Jones was the first in England who gave an example of a single colossal order, and this was in the church of St. Paul's, Covent Garden; while Michael Angelo was the first who had, long previously to this, resumed the colossal style in Italy.

Sir Christopher Wren, who is said to have been inferior to Inigo Jones in invention, but greatly his superior in the perfect unity and elegance of his designs, had the best possible opportunity of exercising his talent at the restoration of Charles the Second, and at a period when the metropolis had been cleared of its crowded buildings by the destructive fire of 1666. The noble and magnificent cathedral of St. Paul stands as the memorial of his greatness, and as an instance of the consistent application of the style we are now considering. During the reigns of Charles the Second, of William and Mary, of Anne, (Wren's constant friend and patroness,) and the commencement of the reign of George the First, he carried on this great work and was enabled to finish it according to the model he had commenced with, though not without much interruption and interference on the part of those who were little qualified to judge of the merit of his work. As a reward for these persevering exertions, and for the disinterested spirit which actuated him throughout, he was dismissed from his office of surveyor-general to the royal buildings, in the eighty-sixth year of his age, and the forty-ninth of his holding the appointment, and a young architect of little skill or talent, named Benson, was appointed in his room. "The length of his life," says Walpole, "enriched the reign of several princes, and disgraced the last of them." Of that grand monument of his fame, St. Paul's Cathedral, there is already some account in a former volume of this work*, illustrated by a view of the west front of the edifice. We subjoin a view of the cathedral in its northern aspect, with Cunningham's remarks, who places this building first in outward majesty, and second in internal grandeur, amongst the churches of Christendom. "Buried amidst a thick piled city—hampered as its architect had felt himself in planning the western front to suit that narrow aperture called Ludgate Hill—composed as it is of free-stone, and not of marble, and stained with all impurities of sea-coal smoke—St. Paul's never fails to fill the mind of the commonest beholder with admiration at its exquisite unity, and varied and boundless magnificence. To construct a small work, pleasing at once from its beauty and neatness, is something; but to conceive and unite the many distant and distinct parts of such an immense pile as this into one complete whole, tying them together with that magic band which is at once their ornament and security, like the sculptured key-stone of a triumphal arch, requires a master spirit.

"Foreign censure, as well as native praise, has been exhausted on St. Paul's; and above all, the Abbé May has distinguished himself by his abuse of the masterpiece of Wren. His fastidious severity might easily be shown by precedents which all bow to, by reference to geometrical rules of construction which must be obeyed, and by the difficulties which the stone presented to be frivolous or unfounded. The coupled columns of the grand portico, in



VIEW OF ST. PAUL'S

particular, have been censured, both by the Abbé and one of our own critics, according to whom the Corinthian capitals, sitting in pairs, injure and obscure each other, and, when viewed obliquely, seem in confusion from the mixture of profiles. If we judge by bits there will be room enough for such criticism in any human work, but it is the general result we must look to, for to that the great artist lent all his thoughts. If we take this portico as a detached work of art, the eye will require all parts to be seen, and will consider the coupled columns as contrary to the strict rules of the profession, since they obscure at least one side of the capital; but look at the portico in its place, as forming a small portion of a majestic pile, in which there are many porticoes, straight and circular, and we see at once that it has been devised with a view to the general effect, and could not well be otherwise than it is without positive injury. Single columns, I am convinced, would seem weak and unequal to the task these have to perform. The tradition of Portland states that stones could not be shipped large enough for the frieze of a portico with single columns, while another story points to the desire of the clergy to have a column for each apostle within a space which could not contain the number without having them coupled. The recessed portico of the second story is a portico for doves and angels, for no earthly being without wings can approach it; but this criticism affects nearly all the architecture of modern times, and the error, if such it be, must be ascribed partly to the object in view and partly to the nature of the materials. The perpendicular portion of the dome, which rises over roof and tower, and can be seen as far as Windsor one way and the sea another, has been more justly complained of as much too plain: it is deficient in light and shade. As Wren has borrowed not very sparingly from the designs of Inigo Jones, he might have formed a dome of a richer pattern. I am afraid to mention what I suspect to be true, that he was alarmed at adding abutments to the dome, lest the increase of weight might be injurious; yet, to secure it, he cut a deep groove or channel in the stone all round, and laid in this a double band or chain of massy iron, strongly linked together at every ten feet, and run flush with lead and hammered smooth and fair. This, though perfectly solid and firm, and employed in Salisbury steeple and St. Peter's dome, is upon his own principles a defect in the construction. The entire structure may be accused of want of massiveness, and of that severe dignity which prevails in so many of the classic fabrics. It is an union of small parts, and relies more upon its geometrical combinations for keeping it together

than on the solid strength of its masonry, and the gravity of its materials. The chief fault, however, is an invisible one. Though the stones are hewn with the greatest nicety, and the masonry seems all firm and compact, yet the mortar which should unite the whole into one solid mass, is in many places decayed, and become as dust. This is the case even with some of those massive piers against which the public monuments are erected. When the outer line of stone is cut through, the mortar comes gushing out in dust at the aperture. The sand is sharp and good, but the lime, like too much of the lime used in London, has been deficient in strength."

Since the time of Sir Christopher Wren, the Cinque-cento style has been applied with more or less taste to the different public and private edifices of this country. For so much are the refinements of civilized life extended amongst us, that men are no longer satisfied with the view of beauty and magnificence in edifices set apart for ecclesiastical and civil purposes, or to admire at a distance the splendour of palatial edifices, but are emulous of transferring to their own habitations that harmony of construction and elegance of decoration which are so productive of pleasure and pleasurable emotions. Thus, the aid of architecture is sought everywhere, and, in many cases unfortunately, without a true perception of those principles which constitute its chief value. Thus the Grecian, Roman, and Gothic styles, are made use of, or even blended, without taste or discrimination, and it will be difficult at some future period to designate intelligibly the architecture of the present time. "Were architecture, as a fine art," (says Elmes,) "equally well understood by the nobility and gentry, by the literary and scientific world, and by the more opulent of the middle classes of England, as it was by the nobility and gentry of the Italian States, and the opulent merchants of Florence, and other commercial cities of modern Italy, a pure and classical style of architecture, and a refined taste in all our arts and manufactures, would equally predominate, and equally embellish the palaces, the streets, the villas, and the mansions of England, as they did the palaces, the piazzas, and the villas of Italy."

Having now bestowed some attention on the houses of rude nations, and having sketched the prominent features of architecture, the reader will be prepared to accompany us in a tour over the civilized world, in order to bestow a few hasty glances on those dwellings which have had the benefit of science, art, and industry in their construction, modified however by the climate and by the manners and customs of their inhabitants.

END OF THE SIXTEENTH VOLUME.

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